

Congressman Ed Markey's Homeland Security Summit Survey Results

September 8, 2003

Summary of Responses from the First Responders of the 7th District of Massachusetts
Staff Report of the Office of Edward J. Markey, US House of Representatives

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The following results are from a Homeland Security Survey completed by police & fire chiefs from the 7th Congressional District of Massachusetts. There are a total of 25 respondents representing 17 of our 19 communities.

The results clearly illustrated urgent needs for increased Homeland Security funding for personnel, communications, overtime pay, and information sharing. Communities located near Boston Harbor all listed Port Security as a top priority. Interoperability and upgrades for existing communication systems are desperately needed by almost every community. Many communities also listed protecting water supplies as a top concern which was not discussed much at the summit in Natick.

Most communities have prepared an emergency response (to a terrorist attack) plan despite not receiving adequate federal funding to cover the costs of preparedness. 24 out of 25 respondents do not feel adequately prepared for a biological or chemical terrorist attack.

All 25 respondents feel that the federal government is not doing all it can do for Homeland Security. Only 8 departments have been contacted by the Homeland Security Department. Communication and coordination are seen as lacking by a majority of the departments. Flexibility with grants is a major issue. Many departments claim that the grants are too restrictive and too specific.

Many departments want to see greater regionalization in the grants process as well as the preparedness plans. The competitive nature of the grants process is counterproductive to cooperation between communities. Many communities have been expecting federal funds, but have not yet received them. 23 communities have been spending large sums of municipal funds for Homeland Security that they were expecting from the federal government.

18 departments believe that future Homeland Security funds will be GREATER THAN today.

Some specific questions and results:

We asked the chiefs to rank Homeland Security funding needs in the following categories:

Border Security, Port Security, Animal/Food Security, Water Supply, Infrastructure, Personnel, HAZMAT, Communications, Overtime Pay, Increased Information Sharing, Other.

The top three priorities across the district were **Personnel, Communications, and Overtime Pay** (information sharing was 4th). Personnel was a top 3 priority in 19 of 25 respondents. Communications & Overtime Pay was a top 3 priority in 13 of 25 respondents. Information Sharing was a top 3 priority of 8 communities. Communities located near Boston Harbor all listed Port Security as a top 3 priority. Equipment and Training was the most popular response to those communities that listed "Other" as a top 3 priority.

Responses to a series of yes/no (and a couple of other type) questions:

1. Does your municipality have an emergency response plan in the event of a disaster or an act of terror? 23 Yes, 2 No
2. Do your municipality's public health officials feel adequately prepared or have adequate resources needed to respond to a biological or chemical terrorist attack? 24 No, 1 Blank
3. Do you feel you have received adequate federal funding to help with preparedness? 25 No
4. Does your municipality specially train your first responders to deal with disasters or acts of terror in accordance with your plan? 14 Yes, 11 No
5. Do you feel you have received adequate federal funding and resources to help facilitate this training? 24 No, 1 Yes
6. If you are currently unable to fund this, or are funding it with difficulty, would additional federal resources help you? 23 Yes, 1 No, 1 Blank
7. How much funding do you believe is needed? Answers varied greatly from \$10,000 to \$250,000 locally. \$1.5+ m statewide
8. Is the federal government doing all it can? 25 No
9. What more can the federal government do for you to secure your hometown?
Personnel, Training, Equipment, Communications
10. Have you ever been contacted by the Department of Homeland Security? 8 Yes, 17 No
11. Has the federal government given you specific information about how best to protect community? 7 Yes, 18 No
12. Are communication and coordination with the federal government adequate? 6 Yes, 19 No

13. Do you have enough flexibility to spend federal Homeland Security funds in the best possible, please elaborate with specific examples: 5 Yes, 20 No

14. What resources do you require to prevent and/or effectively respond to terrorist attack?

More money, flexibility in the grants process, greater regionalization

15. Are the resources you currently have sufficient to prevent and/or effectively respond to a terrorist attack? 24 No, 1 Yes

16. If not, what specific additional resources do you require?

Personnel, Training, Equipment, Communications

17. Have you submitted grant requests to obtain the resources required to meet homeland security needs? 23 Yes, 1 No, 1 Blank

18. If yes, to whom/where did you submit the requests and what have been the results?

FEMA, MA Office of Public Safety

19. How much federal funding have you been told to expect, and how much have you received?

Amounts ranged from \$20,000 to \$300,000. Money expected but not received in most circumstances.

20. Have you had to spend your own funds on Homeland Security? 23 Yes, 2 No

21. If so, how much? Ranges from \$10,000 to \$100,000

22. Do you believe future Homeland Security funding needs will be *greater than, less than*, or about the *same* as today? 18 Greater, 3 Same, 1 Less Than, 3 Blank